

BUILDING OF THE NEW HEBER 1ST, 6TH, & 9TH WARD

MEETING HOUSE

The possibility of a new building had been the topic of discussion for many years by Bishopric's of the Heber First Ward. The old building had been originally built to house the old Heber East Ward. It was then remodeled in 1952. It was a solidly built edifice, but rapidly heading towards major renovation in order to fully conduct the affairs of the two Wards currently using it. However, all efforts to acquire property upon which to build a new building always seemed to dead-end. As a consequence, the matter had stayed on the back burner for quite some time.

The Lord's hand became apparent in temporal matters when in 1976 the Heber First Ward Bishopric actively pursued the acquisition of ground. After several initial attempts and failures to acquire desirable property, it was decided to approach Brother Alma Duke who owned a large piece of valuable property on the north side of the Ward. It was prime farm and development ground, and had been placed in a family corporation controlled by Brother Duke and his children.

With little hope that arrangement could be made to acquire this property, Brother Duke was nevertheless approached. He graciously said he would present the idea to his family, and get back to us. The Bishopric's joy was profound as Brother Duke returned with word that accomodation would be made. His proposal was given with genuine sincerity and helpfulness. He proposed that the church could purchase, at a reasonable price, four choice acres where the old Duke family home sat. This was Brother Dukes current home, and it would be necessary to tear down the old house, and farmstead buildings. Nevertheless, the location could not have been better. The site commanded a beautiful view of Heber Valley, and especially the lovely, green, North end of the valley. It was quite a decision for Brother Duke and his wife Carol, but their reaction was greatly appreciated.

All concerned with the events of this land acquisition were convinced the Lord had intervened to make it happen. This view was further enhanced by the tremendous response with which requests for donations to purchase the property were received. With the raising of funds for this building site, the pattern was set for the entire project. Fund raising was never a serious problem for those in charge of it. From the two Wards (The Heber 1st and 6th, and later the 9th), which were the largest in the Heber East Stake, came the majority of the money. People sacrificed very willingly, and a great many enjoyed blessings never before felt.

On Sunday, October 21, 1979, a short ground breaking ceremony was held at the new building site. It was a rather cold, wintery day, with some snow even covering the ground. Nevertheless, a large crowd witnessed Bishop Mike Spanos, Bishop Michael Moulton, Pres. Larry Duke, and the general contractor, Rex Stallings shovel a few spades of dirt, make a few speeches, and offer a

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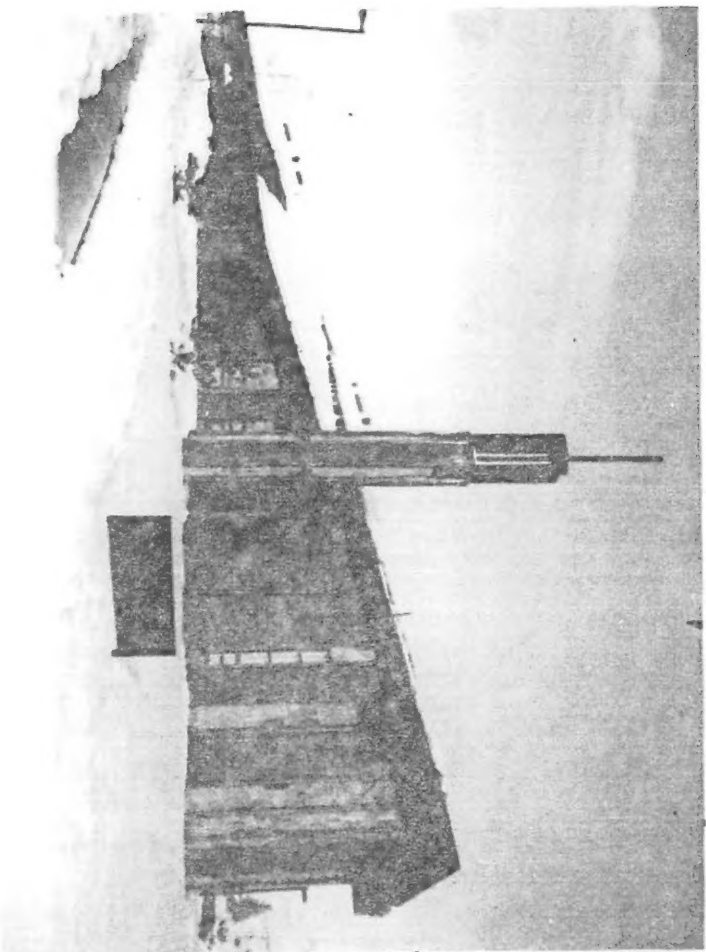
prayer for the Lord's blessing upon the project. All there seemed to feel a sense of history in the making. Something which had been dreamed about for so long was ready to happen.

The prayer offered at the start of the building certainly was answered. The weather cooperated marvelously. In fact, the fall of 1979 turned out to be better than anyone would hope for. The contractor was able to get in the footings and foundations before winter set in. Then with the advent of a rather early and pleasant spring, he immediately started work on the rest of the cement, and by mid summer the building was completed on the outside. The interior work continued on schedule, and even the fall of 1980 cooperated by being an "Indian Summer". We were able to complete most of the landscaping, and even lay blacktop.

The first meetings were held on January 4, 1981. For many people it was a dream come true. The building was beautiful. Full credit needs to be given the general contractor, Rex Stallings and his capable crew, and our wonderful architect, Keith Stepan. There could not have been any better people to work with on the project. Church buildings are usually subject to very little local input from the members who will use the building. However, many features in this building are requests of local leaders to meet local conditions. Brother Stepan went to great lengths to assist us in this regard.

With a final sustained effort during the month of July, 1981, some additional landscaping was finished at the building, and the pipe organ installed. This special organ was given as a gift to the Heber First Ward back in 1953, by Dr. Nielson and his family. It is a very valuable instrument, and upon vacating the old building, it was carefully removed, and then painstakingly refurbished to install back in the new building. It is an extra special feature of the new building, and in fact is the only pipe organ in the area.

With the completion of these things, the building was ready for dedication. This special meeting was held on Sunday, July 12, 1981. Stake Conference had been held in the morning, and it was a fitting climax to the day when Brother Raymond Beckam, our Regional Representative, gave the dedicatory prayer. A combined choir from all three Wards sang two numbers, and tribute was paid to all who made the building a reality. The building has been a source of joy in the lives of those who utilize it, and is truly a blessing to the church in this area of the Lord's Kingdom.



1st, 6th, & 9th Ward Chapel dedicated July 12, 1981,
by Regional Representative, Raymond Beckam.

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